The Night Before Christmas

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Published by
PERFECT PUBLICATIONS &
BLONDE BOMBSHELL COMICS
B.M. Perfect, London, W.C.1.

A PRESENT from PERFECT

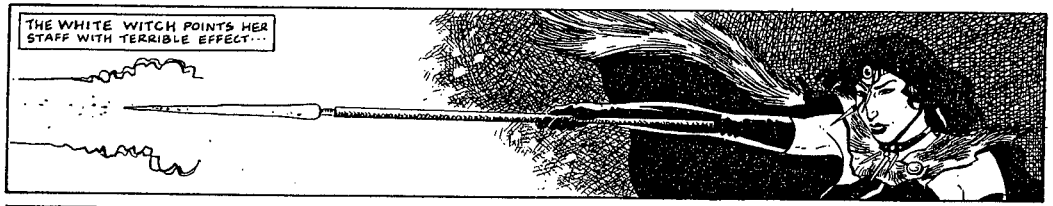
It is Christmas Eve 2025. The city streets gleam white with snow in the lamplight as last minute shoppers bustle in and out of the bright bow-windowed shops. Suddenly, a jingling of bells and a clattering of hoofs is heard as a great sleigh comes down the road laden with parcels, drawn by six reindeer and driven by a familiar figure in a red costume. A shifty, foreign-looking fellow pushes through the crowd and thrusts a gift-wrapped parcel into SANTA'S hands. "Thank you, thank you", cries the jolly old-fellow. "I have enough presents, of course, but I can always do with more." And with that, the great sleigh rises into the air, its six magnificent steeds seeming to tread upon nothing as it disappears among the snowy rooftops. The crowd is astonished, but more astonished still is the shifty-looking fellow, who watches the sleigh as it disappears, and then rushes to a telephone booth, his eyes wide and his hands trembling.

THE STORY PASSES THROUGH THE ORGANISATION ....
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT.
UNTIL IT REACHES THE FAT MAN HIMSELF.
OUR SANTA CLAUS PICK-UP BROKE DOWN SIR AND IT SEEMS THAT AN IMPOSTER PICKED UP THE PARCEL.. IN A FLYING SLEIGH!
WHOEVER HE IS, HE HAS SOME REMARKABLE EQUIPMENT AT HIS DISPOSAL. PERHAPS HE WORKS FOR SOME FORMIDABLE ORGANISATION.
HOWEVER THEY UNDERESTIMATE MY POWER. I SHALL MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF HIM. I SHALL HAVE HIM CRUSHED LIKE A FLEA.
AMONG THE CHIMNEYS SANTA CLAUS BEGINS HIS MERRY ROUND.
WELL, WELL, ANOTHER CHRISTMAS! TIME TO BEGIN!
UNTIL HE'S INTERRUPTED BY A AN UNFAMILIAR SOUND...
enter the deadly FLAPPER
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE BEGINNING, OLD FELLOW, BUT I AM ABOUT TO END IT.

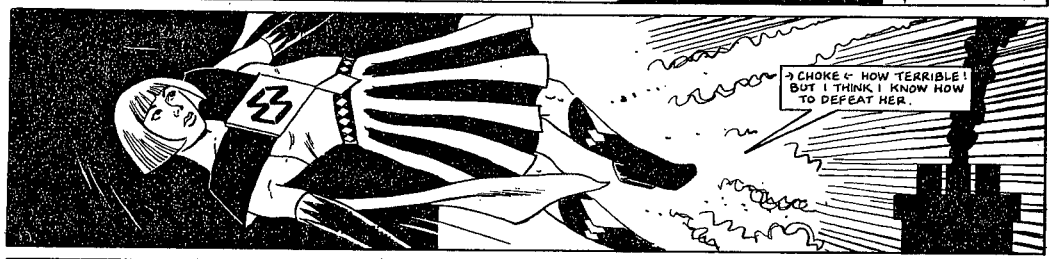
IN A BEDROOM NOT FAR OFF....
MISS WONDERFUL!
MISS WONDERFUL!
BUT WHO ARE YOU...AND HOW DID YOU KNOW..
NEVER MIND! SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS HAPPENING!
PLEASE FOLLOW ME!
AND NOW, YOU OLD MEDDLER ....
YOU!

THE BLONDE BOMBSHELL SHATTERS SANTA'S PRISON.
I WILL FREE YOU SANTA.
CRASH
GET HIM GIRLS!
KRAK
HIGH-POWERED BULLETS EXPLODE HARMLESSLY AGAINST SANTA'S CHEST.
FOOLISH CHILDREN! DON'T YOU KNOW THAT BULLETS CANNOT HURT ME?
BUT... BUT THAT MUST MEAN....
I SEE, MISS FLAPPER, YOU SAY HE REALLY IS SANTA CLAUS?
YOU DON'T BELIEVE THAT NONSENSE, DO YOU SIR?
SILENCE DOG! THERE ARE MANY THINGS BEYOND YOUR PALTRY UNDERSTANDING. IF IT IS HE, THEN I KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH HIM.
THE FAT MAN ENTERS A DARK ROOM, HEAVY WITH EVIL MYSTERY, TO BEGIN A STRANGE AND TERRIBLE INVOCATION.
YES I KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH HIM.

ABOUT MISS WONDERFUL AND SANTA CLAUS THE SKIES CRACKLE WITH STRANGE FORCES AS A PORTAL IS OPENED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS.
WH- WHAT IS THAT?
"IT IS THE WHITE WITCH, MY OLDEST AND DEADLIEST FOE."
INDEED IT IS, OLD MAN I DEFEATED YOU BEFORE AND I WILL DO IT AGAIN. BUT THIS TIME THERE WILL BE NO LION TO SAVE YOU.
GALLANTLY, THE CUTE CRUSADER STEPS FORWARD....
BUT I WILL SAVE HIM YOU WICKED WITCH!
OUT OF MY WAY, CHILD!
THAT HURT ME! SHE MUST BE POWERFUL!


THE WHITE WITCH POINTS HER STAFF WITH TERRIBLE EFFECT···

MY REINDEER! SHE HAS TURNED THEM TO STONE! DASHER! DANCER! MY POOR DEAR FELLOWS. DONNER! BLITZEN! WILL YOU NEVER FLY AGAIN?

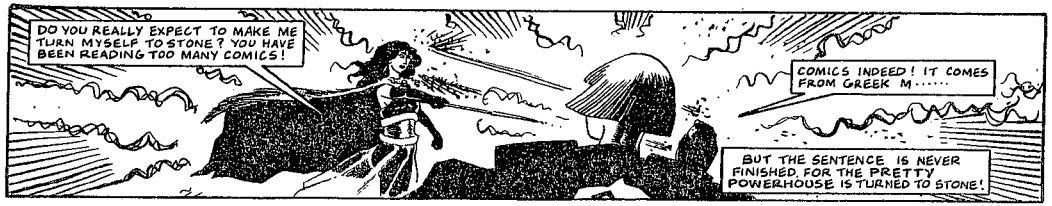

CHOKE & HOW TERRIBLE! BUT I THINK I KNOW HOW TO DEFEAT HER.

THEY WILL NEVER FLY AGAIN YOU SENTIMENTAL OLD FOOL! AND YOU ARE NEXT!

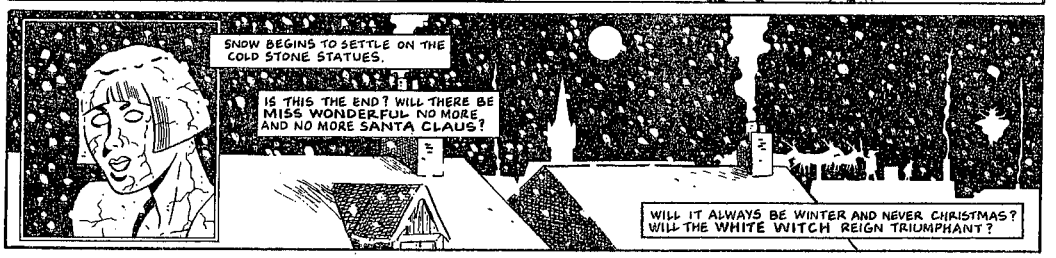
YOU WILL HAVE TO TURN ME TO STONE FIRST.

WITH PLEASURE, MY CHILD. YOU WILL ALL MAKE A CHARMING TABLEAU.

THIS LOOKING-GLASS WILL REFLECT THE WHITE WITCH'S MAGIC BACK AT HER.


DO YOU REALLY EXPECT TO MAKE ME TURN MYSELF TO STONE? YOU HAVE BEEN READING TOO MANY COMICS!
COMICS INDEED! IT COMES FROM GREEK M·····
BUT THE SENTENCE IS NEVER FINISHED. FOR THE PRETTY POWERHOUSE IS TURNED TO STONE!

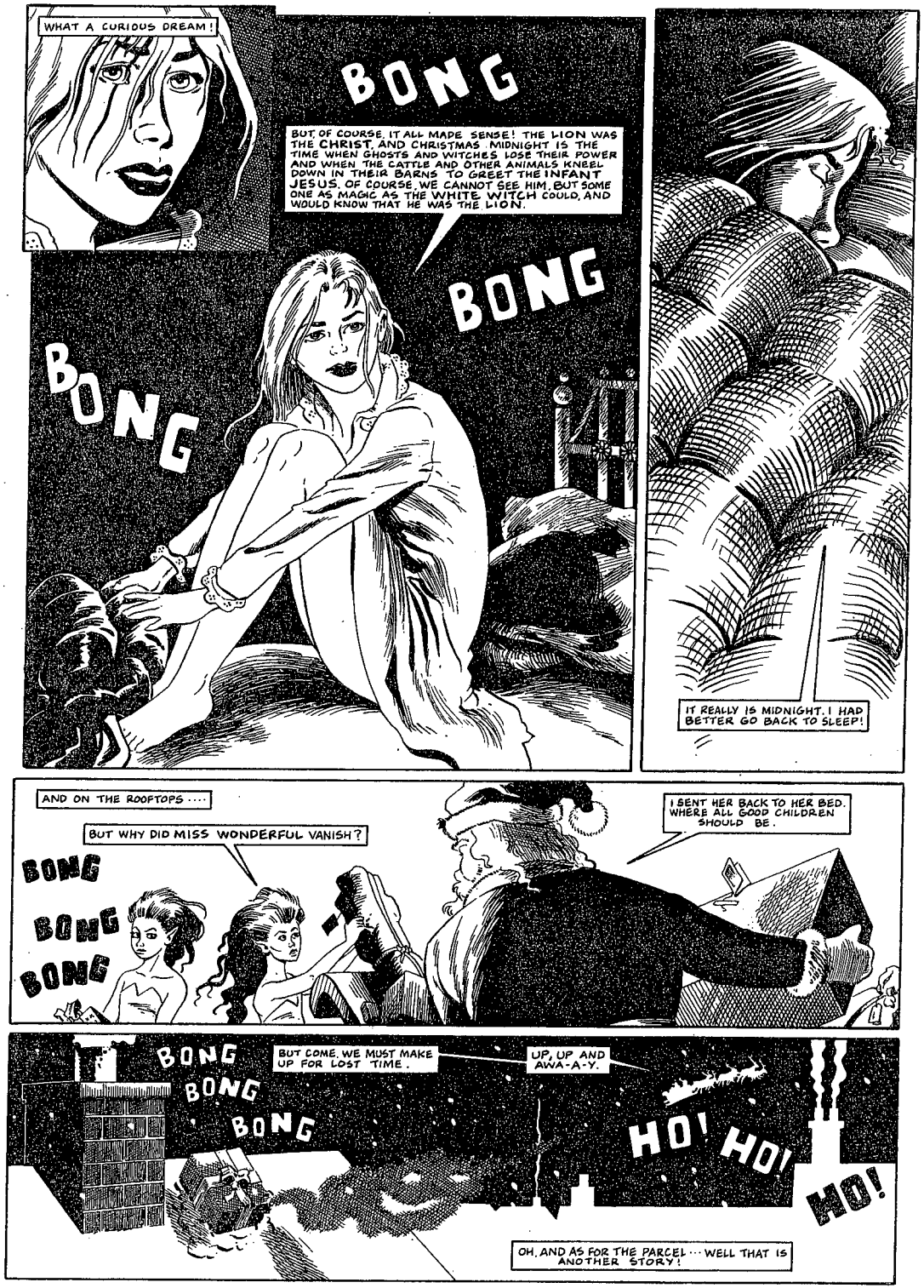
AND NOW CLAUS IT IS JUST YOU AND ME. NO LION. NO FLYING GIRL. NO ONE TO SAVE YOU.
WHAT SAY YOU TO THAT? BUT OF COURSE YOU CANNOT ANSWER ME. NOW! YOU'LL NEVER ANSWER ANY ONE AGAIN!


SNOW BEGINS TO SETTLE ON THE COLD STONE STATUES.
IS THIS THE END? WILL THERE BE MISS WONDERFUL NO MORE AND NO MORE SANTA CLAUS?
WILL IT ALWAYS BE WINTER AND NEVER CHRISTMAS? WILL THE WHITE WITCH REIGN TRIUMPHANT?

AS THE WHITE WITCH LAUGHS THE CHURCH CLOCK CHIMES THE MIDNIGHT HOUR.
MY TRIUMPH IS COMPLETE, MY···· NO! NO! THE LION!
BONG
BONG

'THE LION'
BONG

AS THE WHITE WITCH VANISHES SANTA AND MISS WONDERFUL RETURN TO NORMAL.


WHAT A CURIOUS DREAM!
BONG
BUT, OF COURSE, IT ALL MADE SENSE! THE LION WAS THE CHRIST, AND CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT IS THE TIME WHEN GHOSTS AND WITCHES LOSE THEIR POWER AND WHEN THE CATTLE AND OTHER ANIMALS KNEEL DOWN IN THEIR BARNS TO GREET THE INFANT JESUS. OF COURSE, WE CANNOT SEE HIM, BUT SOME ONE AS MAGIC AS THE WHITE WITCH COULD, AND WOULD KNOW THAT HE WAS THE LION.
BONG
BONG
IT REALLY IS MIDNIGHT. I HAD BETTER GO BACK TO SLEEP!
AND ON THE ROOFTOPS ····
BUT WHY DID MISS WONDERFUL VANISH?
BONG
BONG
BONG
I SENT HER BACK TO HER BED. WHERE ALL GOOD CHILDREN SHOULD BE.
BONG
BONG
BONG
BUT COME, WE MUST MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME.
UP, UP AND AWA-A-Y.
HO! HO!
HO!
OH, AND AS FOR THE PARCEL ··· WELL THAT IS ANOTHER STORY!